

Smelt Update

Thursday – January 29, 2009

Conditions:

Commercial landings have dropped again in this past week. Recreational fishing last weekend was non-existent. No seals or sea lions were spotted near the County Line Park or in the Cowlitz on Wednesday, January 28th. No significant congregations of birds were reported. Also on Wednesday, WDFW staff test dipped on the Cowlitz River at Carnival Market and Lexington. No smelt were caught. A few were detected last Friday in the Lewis River. WDFW will test dip the Lewis tomorrow. Be advised that the Lewis River is closed to commercial and recreational smelt fishing.

The flow at Castle Rock is at 10,500 cfs and slightly dropping (has been at the median daily discharge for the past several days). The river continues to clear (turbidity now 55 FNU). Last week, water temperatures cooled to below 40°F (not desirable for smelt). It hasn't improved much this week: 41°F (5.0°C) in the Cowlitz River and 39°F (3.7°C) in the Columbia River as of this morning.

Overall the sport fishing prospects for this coming weekend look very poor.

Catches:

Columbia River:

Sport: There were no reports of smelt being dipped by sport fishers this season.

Commercial: No commercial landings were reported for December 2008. Mainstem Columbia River landings for this past week were insignificant (136-lbs on the 26th and likely nothing today). Season total is estimated to be 4,021-lbs.

Cowlitz River:

Sport: There has been no activity except a few smelt dipped by a handful of fishers on the 17th.

Commercial: Cumulative catch since January 3rd is 0-lbs.

Sport Seasons/Regulations:

Tributaries - Sport dipping is only allowed on the Cowlitz River, from 6 AM to 10 PM Saturdays through March 31st. The daily limit is 10 lbs per person per day. This is equivalent to ¼ of a 5-gallon bucket.

Mainstem Columbia River daily limit is 25 lbs per person per day and the fishery is open 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

Commercial Seasons:

Columbia River: 7-hour fishing periods on Mondays and Thursdays.

Cowlitz River: 6-hour fishing periods on Sunday and Wednesday nights.

Fishing Rule updates are also available by calling (360) 696-6211, then press *1010

Here are some web sites that provide daily river data:

Cowlitz River water flow and levels: USGS Web site:

http://waterdata.usgs.gov/wa/nwis/uv/?site_no=14243000&PARAmeter_cd=00060.00065

Columbia River estuary water temperature: CORIE Web site:

<http://www.cealmr.ogi.edu/CORIE/network/woody/>